

**RAYLEIGH GRANGE u3a**

**Newsletter - Edition No. 155 2023**



**Welcome to the December  
Newsletter**

***Next monthly meeting at the Grange is on  
Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 2.00 p.m.***

*Our speaker will be **ANDY THOMAS** – “CHRISTMAS – a FESTIVE HISTORY”  
In an uplifting presentation Andy uncovers the fascinating multi-faceted background to  
the festive season exploring the traditions and showing why Christmas has survived and  
still has meaning today.*

***Don't forget to wear your Christmas jumpers and enjoy the Mince Pies  
served with our tea.***

***THERE WILL NOT BE A MONTHLY MEETING AT THE  
GRANGE IN JANUARY***



## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Hello and welcome to the Rayleigh Grange u3a Newsletter.

It's dark and cold out there and it will soon be Christmas! Keep yourselves warm in the understanding that we have many activities and groups with a variety of interests that can give us all a chance of dealing with the cold and dark days. I heard someone say "From November onwards there are no afternoons – we have mornings up to 3.00 p.m. and its straight into night time". How true. One thing to look forward to is the Christmas Party which should be great and lots of us are looking forward to it. It should really kickstart the festive period.

The new groups are gaining interest and we are doing what we do best with our fantastic Group Leaders in that we are all having fun in these dark winter days.

The Grange hall won't be having its end of year building work so we're OK for a while yet before the trees are "managed" and the hall floor is repaired.

***Have a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.***

Take care and have fun.

**Bill Keays  
Chairman**



## QUIZ – MINIMA

1. What name is given to the minimum car insurance required by law in the UK?	2. What is the minimum jack length in lawn bowls (+/- 2 metres)?
3. What is the minimum number of jurors for a criminal trial in the UK?	4. According to Tik Tok's terms and conditions, what is the minimum age of a user?
5. What is the minimum age to drive in the UK?	6. What is the minimum number of weeks that Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is payable (to full time employees)?
7. How many strokes does a player need to make to win a set in a singles game of tennis?	8. What is the legal minimum tread depth of a car tyre in the UK?
9. What is the minimum weight to give blood in the UK (+/- 5kg or 10 lbs)?	10. What is the minimum number of driving lessons required before taking a UK driving test?

**Answers on page 10**

## THANK YOU THERESA



One of our longest serving Group Leaders, Theresa McAninch, has decided that its time to hang up her welly boots. A presentation was made to Theresa at the Garden Group's Shared Lunch held at the Rayleigh Baptist Church on 27<sup>th</sup> November when she was presented with the rose "Simply the Best".

Theresa was one of the first members of our fledgling u3a to volunteer to run a group some 14 years ago. Since then she has organised many visits to Essex gardens and much further afield. We enjoyed a short holiday to Cornwall to see the iconic Eden Project and Lost Gardens of Heligan. Other holidays were to Somerset and a memorable weekend in Norfolk. We also enjoyed an annual barbecue and it was Theresa who, until recently, organised the Christmas Party where we have enjoyed the Barleylands Spectacular, been entertained by the "Everlys" and "Elvis" and enjoyed the Snow Spectacular at the Airport Hotel. Regular visits to RHS Wisley have also been organised.

Thank you Theresa for all you have done to make membership of the Garden Group so enjoyable.

# NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

## ART APPRECIATION



The latest day out by the Art Appreciation Group was to the “Capturing the Moment” exhibition at the Tate Modern. The coming of photography meant that artists were freed from the need to slavishly copy subjects and could branch out into new ways of showing the world. The exhibition displays how art and photography have shaped each other over the decades with works by leading artists and photographers like Picasso, Warhol and Jeff Wall. A really good way to learn about developments in art in a good sociable group.





If you feel you would like to join the Art Appreciation Group please contact the Group Co-ordinator via the website.

**Geoff Pearce**  
**Group Leader**

## OUT AND ABOUT GROUP



Early in November a group of us set off for our trip to London where we were to have a backstage tour of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane followed by a visit to the Bow Street Police Museum.

After taking the bus from Liverpool Street to the Aldwych we dispersed to find refreshment in cafes before our tour.

Our guide, David, met us in the foyer and there began a dramatic and informative hour and a half. The original theatre was built in 1663, but subsequently suffered several fires and rebuilds. The current building dates from 1812 and has had several refurbishments since that time. The stage is vast and has incredible substage lifts which are capable of rocking the whole stage, as in a shipwreck. When war broke out in 1939 the theatre became the headquarters of ENSA and troops were entertained by a variety of revues and plays throughout the hostilities. In October 1940 a high explosive bomb hit the theatre and caused a fire. Although theatre workers were asleep in the room where the bomb landed no one lost their life and the theatre didn't burn down.



At the beginning of 2019 the theatre was closed for a massive restoration project. The grand staircase was returned to its original design and the front of house facilities were developed and improved to enable people to visit for afternoon tea or a drink, as well as attend a performance.



The auditorium is huge and seats over 2000 people, comfortably and with good leg room. The stage can now host the biggest musicals in the West End.

The theatre is owned by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber and the restoration cost him £60 million, taking two years to complete. Many of the theatre's original features were restored as well as improvements to the building allowing wheelchair access and more female toilets!

We were told several anecdotes; one being about how the saying "Box office" came into being. Apparently this derives from Elizabethan theatre times when admission money was collected in boxes at the various entrance doors and then taken to an office to be counted: the term "crew" used in the theatre originates from the nautical world, when seamen would take stagehand jobs between voyages and the word "Drag" comes from Dressing Resembling A Girl.

Our tour ended with David telling us about his small role in the Netflix series "The Crown", where he plays a judge. Several of us looked him up afterwards!





After lunch we reconvened at the Bow Street Police Museum. The building is on three floors. The top two were used as courtrooms with the police station as such occupying the ground floor. The cells remain, complete with their doors and now house photographic and memorabilia displays. Information boards showed scenes from the earliest days of organized policing until its closure when all police work was transferred to Charing Cross.



Our thanks go to Donna and Steve who organized the day, but due to being on holiday, couldn't actually come along.

**Ann C-O.**



## LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

On the 10<sup>th</sup> November the Local History Group were entertained by a volunteer from the Rayleigh Museum with a presentation of Rayleigh Over Time. His talk started with the tale of Robert FitzWimarc, a Norman lord and favourite of Edward the Confessor and his son Sweyne, who was one of the wealthiest landowners in post-Conquest Essex and as such built Rayleigh Castle as his administrative centre, the only castle in the county to be mentioned in the Domesday Book. The talk continued with a number of old photographs depicting how the main thoroughfares of Rayleigh have changed over time and concluded with the air crash at Mac’s Garage on the Eastwood Road where a major disaster was averted by the bravery of the New Zealander pilot.

I would like to wish you all *Season’s Greetings* and look forward to seeing many of you on our final meeting of the year when we start our festive celebrations with our Christmas Lunch at the Rettendon Lodge on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

**Ken Paton**  
**Group Leader**



### ANSWERS – MINIMA

<b>1.</b> Third Party (This covers your liability to others involved in a collision, but not damage to your vehicle)	<b>2.</b> 23 metres
<b>3.</b> 12 (The trial cannot start with fewer)	<b>4.</b> 13
<b>5.</b> 17	<b>6.</b> 39 (Gov.UK: 90% of your average weekly earnings (before tax) for the first 6 weeks. £172.48 or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks)
<b>7.</b> 12 (6 games to win, serving for 3 of those games, 4 aces per game = 12. The answer is not 24, as opponent could hit 12 double faults on their serve)	<b>8.</b> 1.6mm (most tyre centres recommend a minimum tread depth of 3mm for tyre replacement, but this is not the law)
<b>9.</b> 7 stone 12 lbs (or 50kgs). If you look below this weight they will check it before you donate	<b>10.</b> None (there’s no minimum number of lessons you must have or hours you must practise)



## QUIZ – CHRISTMAS

<b>1.</b> Before Turkey what was the traditional Christmas Day meal in England?	<b>2.</b> Where is the UK's tallest Christmas tree situated?
<b>3.</b> Where is the oldest Christmas market in the world?	<b>4.</b> How many gifts were given in total in The Twelve Days of Christmas song?
<b>5.</b> How many Christmas puddings are sold in the UK on average?	<b>6.</b> According to UK tradition when should Christmas decorations come down?
<b>7.</b> Why are chocolate coins given at Christmas?	<b>8.</b> What was the first Christmas tree decoration?
<b>9.</b> In which year was the first Christmas card sent?	<b>10.</b> In what year did Raymond Briggs "The Snowman" first air on TV?

**Answers on page 14**



## STAMP APPEAL – THE BONE CANCER RESEARCH TRUST

For many years our members have saved their used postage stamps to support a charity which has, for several years, been The Bone Cancer Research Trust. Every ten minutes somewhere a child, teenager or adult is diagnosed with primary bone cancer. The Trust has encouraged more researchers to explore primary bone cancer and has funded more research projects than ever before in its history.

Christmas is a good time to start recycling what might otherwise be consigned to the bin and help a charity without making a dent in your finances.

Thank you to everyone who has kindly continued to collect their stamps over the past year. I always have a collecting box at the monthly meeting to collect your contributions.

**Ann Rawlinson**



## GARDENING NOTES JOBS FOR THE GARDEN IN DECEMBER

If you haven't planted tulip bulbs there is still time in December and even in January if the soil allows.

- Clean paths to prevent them becoming slippery.
- Protect plants vulnerable to frosts.
- Keep an eye on container plants and bulbs – don't let them dry out after freezing.
- Wash, dry and store used pots, seed trays and containers to remove overwintering pests and diseases.
- In the greenhouse water overwintering plants sparingly to avoid the risk of rot.
- Regularly wash and disinfect bird baths and feeders.

## CHURCH VISITS GROUP



Our November visit was to the lovely little church of St. Mary & All Saints in Great Stambridge. We were blessed with a glorious winter day sandwiched between two days of torrential rain. . Although it was a lovely sunny morning and quite mild we much appreciated the refreshments our hosts had laid on in the very comfortable church hall.



The church stands away from the village above the river Roach. There is pre-Conquest work in the north wall of the nave and chancel. The south aisle was added c. 1300 and the chancel rebuilt and extended in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The tower and north porch were added in the fifteenth century. There are some lovely and very colourful windows including one made at Whitefriars and dedicated in 1971 to John Winthrop (1588-1649) Governor of Massachusetts and founder of Boston who was married to the first of his four wives at the church in 1605. He was the father of 16 children. The window also depicts the “Arbella” the ship on which he sailed to America.

Our lunch venue (not a pub this time), but the Lakeside restaurant in the village where we enjoyed an excellent lunch.



Photographs by Lorraine Taylor

**Ann Rawlinson**  
**Church Visits Group Leader**



**ANSWERS – CHRISTMAS QUIZ**

<b>1.</b> The traditional Christmas meal in England was a Pigs head and mustard.	<b>2.</b> Wakehurst, West Sussex
<b>3.</b> Dresden’s Striezelmarkt in Germany	<b>4.</b> 364
<b>5.</b> 25 million	<b>6.</b> Twelfth Night – 5 <sup>th</sup> /6 <sup>th</sup> January
<b>7.</b> To honour St. Nicholas	<b>8.</b> Candles introduced by Martin Luther in Germany
<b>9.</b> 1843	<b>10.</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> December 1982



## **FROM THE EDITOR**

The festive season is fast approaching and, at the time of writing, in mid-November Christmas lights are already appearing on houses! The Christmas adverts have been running for a couple of weeks – the festive season begins earlier and earlier, but of course all this does brighten up these dark winter days.

This year we are unable to enter a tree at Holy Trinity Church Christmas Tree Festival, but the organisers have asked that we do visit this lovely event which has become such a feature of the Rayleigh celebrations.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to the newsletter during the year – the reports of u3a visits and holidays, the quizzes, reports of group activities – all showcasing what being a member of u3a is all about.

**Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year**

The deadline for receiving articles for the January 2024 Newsletter is

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023**

**rgu3anewsletter@gmail.com**

**Ann Rawlinson**

**Newsletter Editor**

## GROUP CALENDAR

*If you are interested in joining any of these Groups please contact the Group Co-ordinator*

GROUP	DAY	TIME	GROUP LEADER
ART APPRECIATION	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	2.00 – 4.30 pm	Geoff Pearce
BADMINTON 1	Thursday – Fortnightly	10.00 am	Jacqui Butcher
BADMINTON 2	Wednesday – Fortnightly	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Geoff Pearce
BIRD WATCHING	4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	10.00 am	Peta Turner
BOOK GROUP 1	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Angela Bartlett
BOOK GROUP 2	Last Thursday	3.30 pm	Jackie Dillnutt
BRIDGE	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	7.30 pm	Dave Westall
CANASTA 1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Doreen Brown
CANASTA 2	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Edna Webb
CANASTA BEGINNERS 1	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Clarke-Overy
CANASTA BEGINNERS 2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Jane Gee
CHURCH VISITS	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	10.00 – 1.30 pm	Ann Rawlinson
CINEMA	Wednesday (various)	Afternoon	Christine Shaw
CRIBBAGE	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Susan Neil
DISCUSSION	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Doreen Brown
FAMILY HISTORY 1	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FAMILY HISTORY 2	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FAMILY HISTORY 3	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FAMILY HISTORY 4	4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FILM APPRECIATION	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday		Joan Hanscomb
FUTURE LEARN DISCUSSION	As and when	4.00 – 5.00 pm	Pam Green
GARDEN GROUP	Various		Theresa McAninch
HOME AND AWAY FAMOUS LANDMARKS	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday From Jan 2024	2.30 – 4.00 pm	Theresa Hale
IPAD/TABLET	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Mark Wiseman
KNIT & NATTER	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Ann Clarke-Overy
LOCAL HISTORY	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	2.00 – 3.30 pm	Janet & Ken Paton
LUNCH SUNDAY	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday		Susan Neil
LUNCH WEEKDAY	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday		Edna Webb
MAHJONG	Tuesday – Fortnightly	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Keith Robjent



MARITIME HISTORY	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Sue Howarth-Reading
MINDFULNESS/MEDITATION 1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Carol Bright
MINDFULNESS/MEDITATION 2	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Carol Bright
OUT AND ABOUT	Various Days		Ann Clarke-Overy
PHOTOGRAPHY MONDAY	Various		Geoff Kittle
PHOTOGRAPHY FRIDAY	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Maureen Cheesewright
		Contact via WhatsApp	
PUDDY GALORE	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	4.30 pm	Anne Berry
RUMMIKUB 1	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Jane Gee
RUMMIKUB 2	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Pam Green
SCRABBLE	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Wendy Bedwell
SHAKESPEARE APPRECIATION	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Paula Whittle
SHORT MAT BOWLS	Tuesday – Fortnightly	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Susan Neil
SINGING FOR PLEASURE	1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Joan Wayman
SOLO WHIST	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	11.00 – 1.00 pm	David Lobley
TABLE TENNIS	1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	1.30 – 3.00 pm	Maureen Saveall
TENPIN BOWLING	Tuesday – Fortnightly	11.00 – 3.00 pm	Jacqui Butcher
TEXTILE & CRAFT	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Chris Roffey Sarah Kay
THEATRE/EVENTS	Various times & days		Doreen Brown Edna Webb Susan Neil Ann Clarke-Overy
TRIVIAL PURSUIT	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Steve Barns
WALKING MIDWEEK	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday		Gwen Bushell
WALKING SUNDAY	Last Sunday	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Christine Shaw
WINE THURSDAY	Various	7.00 pm	Susan Neil Ann Newman
WINE FRIDAY	Various	7.00 pm	Susan Neil Ann Newman
WOMEN IN HISTORY	Last Friday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Lynda Rooke
u3a MONTHLY MEETING	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	1.30 – 4 .00 pm	Various Speakers

*For specific dates please liaise with your Group Leader.*

**PLEASE REMEMBER - NO JANUARY MEETING AT THE GRANGE**